

# Project Northland

- Publisher or Agency
  - Hazelden Foundation
  - 15251 Pleasant Valley Road
  - P.O. Box 176
  - Center City, Minnesota 55012

Program was developed by the  
University of Minnesota,  
Department of Public Health,  
School of Alcohol  
Epidemiology, Chief  
Investigators: Cheryl Perry,  
Ph.D., and Carolyn Williams,  
Ph.D.

- Professional Market Served
  - Middle School Teachers
  - High School Teachers
  - Community Coalition Members
  - Substance Abuse Prevention Specialists

# Target Populations: Project Northland

- Components: Slick Tracy, Amazing Alternatives and Powerlines – middle school (grades 6 – 8)
- Slick Tracy can begin in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade if a needs assessment indicates alcohol starting in that grade.
- Class Action: High School (grades 9 – 12)
- Class Action was researched in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, but the program can be done in other high school grades, depending on students' abilities.

# Project Northland

- Middle school curriculum: 3 year classroom program with 8 sessions each year.
- High School Class Action is a one year program, a minimum of 6 sessions with small groups of students working on their “cases” outside of the classroom. A maximum of six cases can be presented in class with each presentation taking a class period of 45 – 50 minutes.
- Key Factors Addressed
  - Environmental Risk Factors
    - Aspects of the environment that support, permit, or discourage alcohol use by adolescents
    - Involvement of parents in giving no use messages
    - Involvement in community supporting youth no-use and reducing youth access to alcohol
  - Interpersonal Risk factors
    - Personality characteristics
  - Behavioral Risk Factors
    - Behaviors that affect alcohol use

# Key Outcomes: Project Northland

- Baseline Nonusers
  - Reduced monthly drinking by 28%
  - Reduced weekly drinking by 46%
  - Reduced cigarette smoking by 37%
  - Reduced marijuana use by 50%

- Intervention Group
  - 20% reduction in monthly drinking
  - 30% reduction in weekly drinking
  - 27% reduction in alcohol and cigarettes together

*Class Action outcome studies are being sent for publication and are not yet available.*

# Key Program Strategies for Project Northland

- Peer led small groups
- Youth challenging norms with other youth (influencing one another)
- Small group activities, games, discussions, projects, reports
- Parental message supporting nonuse
- Educate parents about alcohol use
- Community Involvement to reduce youth access/support nonuse
- Alcohol specific
- Consequences of use (emphasizes short-term)
- Covers all three middle school years plus 1 year of high school
- Counteracts media influences to use
- Involve youth with community leaders

# Product Cost

- Slick Tracy: 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum includes 1 teacher's manual, 30 sets of 4 comic books, 30 envelopes, 1 poster - \$245.00
- Amazing Alternatives: 7<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum includes 1 teacher's manual, 4 cassette tapes, 1 blackboard game and 2 posters - \$245.00
- Powerlines: 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum includes 1 teacher's manual and 1 cassette tape - \$245.00
- Supercharged: Community strategies includes a 130 pp. three-ring binder and 30 handbooks - \$245.00
- Class Action: High School Curriculum - \$450.00 includes 1 teacher's manual, 12 audio cassettes, one case book per student small group (up to six per class)

# Product Cost: Project Northland

- Training Options:
  - Slick Tracy, Amazing Alternatives and Powerlines: 2 days @ 6 hours per day
  - Slick Tracy, Amazing Alternatives, Powerlines and Supercharged: 2 ½ days @ 6 hours per day
  - Amazing Alternatives: one day @ 6 hours per day
  - Powerlines & P.N. overview: 1 day @ 6 hours
- Training events can be tailored to fit needs
- Hazelden is currently addressing the issue of cost effectiveness and offers a bundling of product and training. This is evaluated on a case by case basis.
- Hazelden is dedicated to providing quality services

# Barriers to implementation

- Funding – due to cuts in prevention funding sources, agencies/schools need to research and find additional funds: State Incentive Grants (SIGS), Safe Schools/ Healthy Students (SS/HS), Safe and Drug Free Schools & Communities, Drug Free Communities, local civic groups (Kiwanis, Rotary, etc.)
- Materials – a barrier that has often occurred is that an individual is trained in the program and may change jobs and then takes the curriculum with them. Agencies/schools need to outline procedures for training materials.



# Barriers

- Some of the staff like the curriculum and some do not. Successful implementation of a program requires that everyone involved is on the same page (understanding) and moving in the same direction (implementation, evaluation, etc.)
- Length of time – Project Northland requires a commitment from all – administration, teachers, students, parents and community members. Change does take time and once students become actively involved they become the change agents in the school setting as well as the community.

# Barriers

- School time factors – Due to the increasing demands on school time (standardized testing) teachers are not always willing to give up time. Project Northland has been aligned with the National Education Standards. There are some schools who have infused Project Northland into the curriculum. The standards are available upon request.
- Hazelden is currently providing a bundling of product purchases and training. This will allow schools and/or agencies to obtain training and materials in a cost effective manner. Contact Hazelden for additional information related to bundling. 1-800-328-9000 ext. 4324 Kaylene McElfresh.

# Fidelity

- Science-based research must document fidelity
- Measuring fidelity determines if the program was delivered as intended
- More research is needed to determine how adherence to implementation guidelines affects program results.
- Research varies in regards to adding material to a program – effectiveness may or may not improve
- If a selected program is altered by the number of sessions delivered, the length of time for each session, or the number of program objectives addressed – the program would lack fidelity.
- Research indicates that when the program is implemented according to the design, the recipients receive greater benefits.

# Adaptation

- Prevention programs may be subject to adaptation by the target community.
- The current challenge for prevention is that programs should be flexible and allow for modifications.
- Major modifications to a program design will detract from the program's integrity and effectiveness (Hall & Loucks 1978)
- Data collection will help determine the success or failure of a program.

# Implementation

- Needs assessment
- Administrative school support (training and materials)
- Survey tools to gather baseline data and determine measurable outcomes
- Adequate coverage and sufficient follow-up
- Adequate funding for materials & training
- Timelines – when, who, etc.
- Flexible school schedules
- Peer training component
- Parent, peer and community involvement
- Action planning for staff, students, parents and community involvement

# Implementation

- Project Northland should be offered the same time every year (it can be offered at any time – fall, winter, spring)
- After training the program can be implemented immediately
- Hazelden provides training and technical assistance
- Implementation sites:
  - Dakota County – Lakeville and Farmington, MN Mary Montagne  
1-651-552-3119 (rural and suburban)
  - Eden Prairie School District, Eden Prairie, MN  
Kim Kane (SDFSC Coordinator) Suburban  
1-952-975-8075

# Cultural Sensitivity

- Project Northland  
People of color were represented in program materials, which included content specific to northern Minnesota Indian tribes and were sensitive to rural and small town life in a northern climate. Programs were offered to a small school located on an Indian reservation outside the intervention districts when some of the cohort began transferring in and out of the study schools.
- Cultural adaptations: Hazelden is currently researching a Spanish translation of Project Northland.
- Current research in the Chicago, Illinois area (inner city).

# Sustainability

- Interactive teaching strategies – peer leaders, role plays, comics, games, alternative activities, and small group activities help sustain the program due to the variety of teaching methods and addressing learning styles. (People generally remember 70% of what they say or write and 90% of what they say as they perform a task – hearing, saying, seeing and doing: Dale's Cone of Experience)
- Funds – SS/HS, Drug Free Communities, SIG, local foundations and civic groups, etc.
- Hazelden does have a template available for the Drug Free Communities grant (due 4/24/02)



# Sustainability

- Materials – the only consumable of Project Northland are the Slick Tracy comic books. Schools/agencies have approached local community groups (peer leaders have presented on the program and outcomes to the community).
- Commitment to program